

**Testimony of Susan L Yolen, on behalf of the Board of PoliticaCT  
on HB6616, *An Act Concerning Expansion of HUSKY Health Benefits  
to those Ineligible Due to Immigration Status*  
Human Services Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly  
February 14, 2023**

Senator Lesser, Representative Gilchrest and members of the Human Services Committee, thank you for this opportunity to express the support of PoliticaCT for HB 6616, *An Act Concerning Expansion of HUSKY Health Benefits to those Ineligible Due to Immigration Status*.

PoliticaCT is a nonprofit advocacy organization devoted to promoting public policy that prioritizes the needs and rights of women. I am a volunteer member of its board. PoliticaCT supports HB6616, and asks the Committee to pass the legislation in its current form. The bill will expand important HUSKY health benefits to State residents up to the age of 26, regardless of their immigration status, if they otherwise meet the current criteria for enrollment in the State's HUSKY program.

If we have learned anything since 2020, it is that health care access is invaluable in order to insure healthy families and the healthy essential workers that we all depend upon. The Kaiser Family Foundation estimates that 58% of the estimated 113,000 undocumented residents of CT lack any form of health insurance coverage at all. And while the General Assembly has previously taken the positive step of including undocumented children up to age 12 and pregnant/postpartum people in the HUSKY program, other key family members may well remain vulnerable to illness or worse.

Studies have demonstrated that when parents are insured, their entire family, including children, is more likely to take advantage of routine preventive care and other services. When health care is affordable and accessible, health care becomes a 'family value.'

COVID has taught us that our entire population is vulnerable to aggressive communicable diseases. More than ever, we have come to count upon each other to be doing what is necessary and reasonable to stay well. It is in the interest of every citizen that all residents of our state are able to seek treatment when they are ill. Yet out of pocket health care and hospitalization has never been more costly.

There is demonstrated voter support in CT for HUSKY expansion to undocumented residents. You will almost certainly see a robust, inspiring turnout to this hearing. But health care equity is above all a moral issue that rings true for most of us. Over 60 years ago, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, a global resolution led by US First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, included "medical care and necessary social services" among its list of basic human rights.

It is in that spirit that PoliticaCT offers its unqualified support for HB 6616 and urges the Committee to pass the bill in its current form. Thank you.

